

HALE CROSBY THORNTON: A NEVADA DAR FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE

Interviewee: Hale Crosby Thornton

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Description

A member of a prominent New England family, Hale Crosby Thornton was born on April 15, 1921, in Dover, New Hampshire. She was brought up there on the dairy farm originally purchased by her great-grandfather, and she was educated and married in New Hampshire. In 1945, she came to Reno to obtain a divorce from her first husband. In 1947 she married Victor Thornton, a member of a pioneer Nevada family.

In 1977, she was elected president of the Nevada Sagebrush Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). This makes her well qualified to discuss the history of the DAR in northern Nevada, especially its role in the preservation of historic Fort Churchill, and this oral history provides much information on these two topics.

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MAX REA KINDALL PRODUCED THIS ORAL HISTORY AS A STUDENT IN THE
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HISTORY: METHOD AND TECHNIQUE." MR. KINDALL IS A TEACHER OF
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An Oral History Conducted by Max Rea Kindall

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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CONTENTS

Preface to the Digital Edition	ix
Introduction	xi
A Nevada DAR from New Hampshire	1
Original Index: For Reference Only	19

PREFACE TO THE DIGITAL EDITION

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

The UNOHP wishes to make the information in its oral histories accessible to a broad range of patrons. To achieve this goal, its transcripts must speak with an intelligible voice. However, no type font contains symbols for physical gestures and vocal modulations which are integral parts of verbal communication. When human speech is represented in print, stripped of these signals, the result can be a morass of seemingly tangled syntax and incomplete sentences—totally verbatim transcripts sometimes verge on incoherence. Therefore, this transcript has been lightly edited.

While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the “uhs,” “ahs,” and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete...or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

same prudence that the intelligent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information. All statements made here constitute the remembrance or opinions of the individuals who were interviewed, and not the opinions of the UNOHP.

In order to standardize the design of all UNOHP transcripts for the online database, most have been reformatted, a process that was completed in 2012. This document may therefore differ in appearance and pagination from earlier printed versions. Rather than compile entirely new indexes for each volume, the UNOHP has made each transcript fully searchable electronically. If a previous version of this volume existed, its original index has been appended to this document for reference only. A link to the entire catalog can be found online at <http://oralhistory.unr.edu/>.

For more information on the UNOHP or any of its publications, please contact the University of Nevada Oral History Program at Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0324 or by calling 775/784-6932.

Alicia Barber
Director, UNOHP
July 2012

INTRODUCTION

A member of a prominent New England family, Hale Crosby Thornton was born on April 15, 1921, in Dover, New Hampshire. She was brought up there on the dairy farm originally purchased by her great-grandfather. She was educated and married in New Hampshire, as well. Then in 1945, she came to Reno to obtain a divorce from her first husband. In 1947 she married Victor Thornton, a member of a pioneer Nevada family. Since then, she has had wide and varied experiences in Reno and Unionville. In 1977 she was elected President of the Nevada Sagebrush Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. This position makes her well qualified to discuss the history of the DAR in northern Nevada, especially its role in the preservation of historic Fort Churchill.

When invited to participate in the Oral History Project, Hale Thornton accepted graciously, although she expressed surprise at the interest in DAR activities. A petite and quiet woman, she entered the first recording session nervously. Subsequent sessions were more relaxed, however. After

an initial planning session on the campus of the University of Nevada, Reno, all recording sessions were held in her home during the months of June and July, 1977. Mrs. Thornton's review of her oral transcript resulted in only a few minor corrections of fact and a few changes of language for the sake of clarity. There were no changes in the substance of the text.

The Oral History Project of the University of Nevada, Reno, Library preserves the past and present for future research by tape-recording the reminiscences of persons who have played significant roles in the development of Nevada and the West, or who have witnessed events of importance. Scripts resulting from the interviews are deposited in the Special Collections Department of the University Library, where they are available to scholars. Hale Thornton's oral history is designated as open for research.

Max Rea Kindall
University of Nevada, Reno
1977

A NEVADA DAR FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE

I'm Hale Crosby Thornton and I was born in Dover, New Hampshire, on April 15, 1921, at Crosby Farm. I was born at home and so was my sister, Beatrice. My mother was Beatrice Irene Costello, who was born August 3, 1897, in Randolph, Massachusetts. She graduated from Radcliffe College. My father was Robert Shackford Crosby. He was born March 16, 1895, in Medway, Massachusetts. He was a member of the class of 1918 at the University of New Hampshire. His father was a Congregational minister who had grown up in Illinois and had come east and taken some graduate work at Harvard. [He] then had a pastorate in New Hampshire at the Congregational Church, where he met my grandmother. Then they moved to Massachusetts, but only stayed there a short time. Then they came back to New Hampshire. I was the oldest of four children. I have two sisters and a brother. I graduated from the University of New Hampshire, too, with the class of 1943.

My mother's family had lived around Boston. Her father had been born in

Providence, Rhode Island, on Thanksgiving Day in 1860. Her mother had been born in Calcutta, India. My mother's grandfather, my own great-grandfather, was a captain in the British army. My great-grandmother came from Wales, near Cardiff. She went out to India. Now, how she met this man and how she happened to get to India I don't know, but they were married in the British compound there and their four children were all born in India. So when my great-grandfather Carter was leaving the British army, they were going back to England by way of Boston to visit her sister who was living there. They stayed for Borne time and, one of these things, he happened to die in the course of the visit. So she simply stayed on with her sister. They had been away from England—away from their home—for many years by that time, of course, and she had no, perhaps, real close ties anymore. But she did have the sister, who is living around Pemberton Square, which is part of Beacon Hill. Part of that has been torn down now; as the State House in Boston grew larger, they took over part of the

street. She was a friend of General Butler of the Civil War, whom they used to call “Beast” Butler, I believe. [Laughter] I remember as a little girl around my grandparents’ home, they had a small bust of General Butler which he had given to my great-grandmother as a little memento. But that was always there. [Laughter]

My father’s family were New Englanders all the way on his mother’s side. My seven-great-grandfather and grandmother Hale were members of the church in Boston by 1632. They had arrived between the date of ’30 and ’32; that wasn’t definite, but they were certainly members of the church by ’32, which meant that they had probably arrived a little bit earlier than that date. My six-greats—now I’m not putting all the “greats” in and maybe I should—that would be great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, John Hale, graduated from Harvard College in 1657 and he went as a chaplain in Phip’s expedition against Canada in 1693. And the interesting thing about him is he had three wives. Women sometimes didn’t live too long, you know. His second wife—from whom my family is descended; we’re from the children of the second wife—was Sarah Noyes Hale. She was accused of witchcraft, but nothing came of it, fortunately. [Laughter] But she was.

Arthur Miller wrote a play concerning witchcraft in the Bay Colony, not too many years ago, and this Reverend John Hale, my six-great-grandfather, was one of the characters in the play. When my daughter was at the University of Nevada, she took a course—it was an American History-Government course—and the book that they used, *The American Past*, mentions the Reverend John Hale and a book that he wrote. It says—it was commenting on Robert Calef, who also did a book of anti-witchcraft—“it was Hale’s book that men of the clerical class some years later

proposed to distribute to prevent a possible outbreak” of future witchcraft. I have never seen the book mentioned anywhere but here, and I’d love to see it.

Well, my five-great-grandfather Hale just sort of went along with it all. But my four-, my great-great-great-great-grandfather, was Major Samuel Hale. Now he had two brothers. One was Deacon Richard Hale, who was the father of Nathan Hale. Nathan was the middle child of twelve. His other brother, John, was the great-grandfather of Senator John Hale from New Hampshire during the Civil War period. He spoke against slavery. He was one of the first Abolitionist Senators. I believe he was also a Free Soil Presidential candidate at one time, too, but he lost that election. Major Samuel Hale graduated from Harvard College in 1740. In 1745 he went as a captain in a New Hampshire regiment to the siege of Louisburg and he returned as a major. In 1771, through the Royal Governor, Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire, he was granted a Royal Grant by King George the Third, which consisted of twelve-hundred acres in the northern part of New Hampshire. This is still shown on the New Hampshire maps as Location.” The original document is in the state archives in Concord, New Hampshire.

Now, oddly enough, I cannot join DAR on the Hale line because he remained loyal during the Revolutionary War period. This was at the time the Revolution was starting: in 1771 he received his grant, his twelve-hundred acres. So, anyway, he did refuse to sign the Freedom Papers. He never left New Hampshire: he never left his home and went into Canada as many Tory families did—just rather simply sat it out, you know, but he did remain loyal. I suppose he had a lot of conflicts—he was a man who had fought for the King and had been, I’d say, rewarded, too. That’s how he got to stay there. Naturally,

being a New England family and having lived there all this time, we have dozens of other branches that we can join on—the Shackford's, the Buzzell's, the Hayes's. The Hayes were a very old family settling in the Piscataqua area.

My mother's family was much more sophisticated, I think. They weren't tied in with Puritanism and things like that so much. They had a lot of fun. I do remember one thing about my grandfather's house outside of Boston. When I was a little girl, we always celebrated his birthday on Thanksgiving Day. It didn't always come on the last Thursday every year, but we always celebrated. He had two sisters who lived in Boston and they would come out by subway and trolley for Thanksgiving dinner. I couldn't imagine what everybody was laughing about. Everybody was so funny. Years later, I realized that this was Prohibition and they had brought a bottle for the Thanksgiving Day dinner. Both of them always carried muffs, and here was my great-aunt Margaret—because she had the biggest muff—she got to carry the bottle in her muff. [Laughter] As a small child, I couldn't imagine why everybody was laughing when they got to the house. Later on, it dawned on me. But they did have a nice time.

Also my great-aunt Margaret was a very elderly lady and she could vaguely remember the last of the sailing ships coming into Boston Harbor. It was a relative who was captain of one of the ships that came between Liverpool and Boston and this was the last trip that the ship would be making. It was going to be steam from there on in. She was taken to a party on board on the last trip. But she never talked much, which was kind of too bad. She wasn't a person who yarned along.

My father was a dairy farmer, raised and bred Holstein Frisians. The farm was a delightful place to grow up. My great-

grandfather Hale had bought it and my grandmother had grown up there. She was an only child and her mother died when she was fairly young. When she and my grandfather came back from Massachusetts, he returned to the Congregational Church in Barrington and they just simply moved into her father's house. Then when my father and mother were married, they decided to live there. Grandmother and Grandfather Crosby moved out to a farm they held in Arcade, New York, at that time. He retired from the ministry about that time.

* * * * *

I came to Reno in 1945. I had married shortly after I graduated from college in '45 and, like a lot of things, it just wasn't working out. At that time Reno was still the place where you came. And so when I arrived, there were enormous numbers of girls here my age. We had all gotten married at that particular time and then decided that it just wasn't for us. I first stayed at the Golden Hotel for a few days. At that time, your lawyer had lists of guest houses, you know, where you could stay. There was this one house on Maple Street—a woman named Mrs. Collier ran it and there were about five of us in this same age group who stayed there. We had a fairly good time together. Reno was, well, was a lot different then, I think. It was more a small town, certainly. They weren't all big clubs. To go down to the Golden was quite exciting. And the old Golden Bar. And then there was a little restaurant, the Bonanza, which I thought was the most fabulous place I'd ever been in in all my life. [Laughter]. And the old Riverside—I considered that quite elegant. They always had waiters, you know, and everything. The bar there would be absolutely crowded at that time. And there was Colbrandt's and, of

course, the Arcade where Magnins used to be. That was there then. They didn't have any shopping centers.

Another thing that has changed in Reno since I first came here is where our Washoe County Library is located. It used to be in the old State Building across from the Washoe County Court House. There was a pretty little park in front of it, with the trees and the fountain and the statue which is now in front of, I believe, the Chamber of Commerce Building. Downstairs on the lower floor was the State Historical Society and they had that terrible two-headed calf. [Laughter] I always remember that. And in, well, later years, even when my girls were in high school, the State Building was still standing and the high school youngsters used to have dances there at that time.

In 1947 I married Victor Thornton. I had met him through Mrs. Collier's daughter and son-in-law. They were friends and had introduced us. Of course, his family had been in Nevada for some time. His grandfather had been born in Unionville in 1897 and his mother was born in Grantsville, Nevada. I've stayed here ever since. We had three daughters—Jennifer, Victoria, and Beatrice.

When my husband and I were first married—the day after we were married—he took me to Unionville. Now he had always told me about it and his father had talked about it, but I hadn't seen it. And I really thought it was a lovely place. At that time there were quite a few more families living there than there are now. These were the older families at that time. His father's sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Leonard, were there at that time. His cousin, Jane Davidson and her husband Spence, still lived there. The Talcotts—Mrs. Fred Talcott—still lived there and her husband's family had been brought up out there. Her youngest son, Neil, and his

wife were living on a little dry ranch down in the valley. They now live in Lovelock. These were a lot of people that moved out, even in a relatively short time. The Ernsts were still there. Robert Ernst is still there now, although his parents are dead. The Gallios were down on their ranch in the valley at that time. They have all moved out, including the Evers as well.

But everybody sort of knew everybody else. Of course, we didn't have very much to do in the way of social life. Somebody got the idea of organizing a sewing circle. All of us ladies would meet, oh, once every two weeks, I'd say, around at the different houses. We were supposed to bring some sewing, but usually we didn't. We went for the tea and cookies, I think. [Laughter] Oh, they'd maybe play games, something like that—just pass a very pleasant afternoon. One time we all got together at the Evers for a barbecue. Everybody brought something. I had a wood stove to cook on and nothing else and I was to bring a cake. Well, naturally, it had to be good. [Laughter] So I very carefully cleaned out my oven, you know, took all the ashes out. I took the soot out from underneath and got my fire going. Well, I kind of overdid it. [Laughter] It got a little bit too hot. Fortunately, I was able to salvage one layer and then I made another one all over again. [Laughter] But I did learn to cook on that wood stove.

This house where we stayed had belonged to my husband's grandmother. It was not the original Thornton home in Unionville. It was a house she had moved into after she was a widow. We had no electricity. We had cold running water, which was fun, and I had a gasoline-powered washing machine which my mother-in-law had had on the ranch. And most people—when I would say it ran on gasoline—were just amazed. They couldn't imagine what would make it work. It had an

exhaust pipe you hung out the window and you started it much as you would a car, by sort of snapping your foot off the little pedal. If you were real lucky, it caught the first time or two. At that time, there were quite a lot of apple trees left up there. Victor's grandfather had planted many of the old trees. There aren't too many of them left now—although there are a few. If you go back to New Hampshire to one of the Shaker communities—there is one in existence in Canterbury still—you will find that they have these same old apple trees. They tell you that they are ones that are only kept alive now in nurseries as rather a museum piece, a shelf stock. This is "Maiden's Blush," "Sheep's Nose;" they are the real old ones. Victor said he had no idea where his grandfather got these trees—if he brought them with him or if he sent back for them, but I thought it was interesting that here they were in New Hampshire being kept alive as a curiosity and I had been seeing them out there and hadn't known a thing about it.

We only spent the summers up there. We'd usually come back to Reno about Thanksgiving time—a little bit before. We'd stay up through hunting season. That was a big thing. Victor's brother-in-law would come out. Maybe he'd bring a friend or two. It was rather a social time more than anything else.

At that time Victor and his father were both holding the mining claim that's across the road from the house. This was an old gold mine. They'd built a three-stamp mill which every once in a while they would run. It was workable, you know. They spent most of their time there. That was what they did during the summer, working in that particular mine. They also had a lead claim down below at that time. They'd go down there. There is a [government] requirement which is still the same—proof of labor one hundred dollar's worth. Something like that. Of course,

actually figuring wages, they'd put in much more time than that. It might not have been the most profitable way to spend the summer, but it was one of the most pleasant. [Laughter]

Victor also kept a horse up there, named Brownie. The girls did like Brownie pretty much. It was always fun to get a ride. So after a while they always referred to it as Brownie's house. [Laughter] It was always Brownie's house.

* * * * *

Now I had never been a DAR until 1966; I certainly waited a long time. [Laughter] And I was officially confirmed a member at Continental Congress on April 15, 1966. And at that time I joined Toiyabe Chapter, which has since been disbanded. You're sponsored by two people who are already members of the chapter. You pay your national dues and your chapter dues and your papers are sent to Washington. It has your entire lineage on it and all the references and everything like that. Then it has to be confirmed by the National Society. They have to approve your joining the chapter and ascertain for themselves that your papers are in order. A copy is kept there and your chapter has a copy, too. You can ask, if you care to, that your papers be closed and no one allowed to use them for their own reference work until after your death—if you care to do that. Most of us, I think, keep them open, but it can be done. You can ask that no one use your paper.

There are numerous qualifications for joining. It doesn't have to be actual military service. They set the dates [of the Revolution] as from 1775 to 1783, although they do include daughters of the signers of The Declaration of Independence—that would be a little bit before. Such things as a town cleric, a selectman, a juror, a constable,

anything that would have something to do with local government and in which they were taking a part. Also patriotic service, such as signing papers pertinent to the different committees—signers of the Oath of Fidelity and Support, the Oath of Allegiance, the Articles of Association, and the Association Tests—those sort of papers. Even if you just signed them and didn't do anything else, that makes you eligible. You took your stand throughout the towns in New England almost like a census. You signed up whether you would or you wouldn't—that was it. This was how my, well, great-grandfather Hale refused to sign and it's right down there. They also include descendents of people who took part in the Boston Tea Party, and Aid to Boston, the defenders of forts and frontiers, signers of the Mecklinburg Declaration—which, of course, was 1775, too—chaplains, doctors, nurses, things like that. One thing that's interesting, too, is furnishing a substitute for military service. I have never known a DAR who has joined on that particular qualification, but maybe she's just not admitting it. [Laughter] I know that was a surprise to me. I know it was done during the Civil War. That was a very common thing—more so in Northern states, I think, than in Southern states. I know even in my own family, the Hayes's, one of the men was eligible for military service during the Civil War. Well, he simply paid someone—my father said three hundred dollars—to go in his place. Now that's a bargain. [Laughter] As I say, I did know it was done during the Civil War and it was not a rare thing at that time, really, but as far as it happening during the Revolution—that was new to me. Also, you do have to be eighteen years of age and of good moral character, but we don't look into that too closely. [Laughter] And these do have to be legitimate births, you know, straight down the line. You have your

documentation. It's interesting to fill them out; I won't say it's easy, but sometimes it is. There are many Revolutionary War rolls—the Colonies kept good records, they really did. In New England it isn't too hard to do. If your ancestor was a pensioner, [and] if you have a copy of the pension, that's fine; but if you don't, you can write to the Veteran's Administration Archives. They have records that go back that far. And, of course, there are any number of church records. There are also wills; they are acceptable as proof as long as he says, "To my wife I leave . . ." or "To my daughter . . .," you know, it's spelled out pretty much. Gravestones—that kind of thing—are acceptable because usually they always said, "Wife of . . .," or, "Husband of so-and-so," that kind of thing. The difficult part—and where most people have a little trouble—is during the Westward Movement when many times records were lost or destroyed. The town disappeared. They were married or died on a wagon train, maybe, or born on one. But if your family was bringing their Bible with them and it was recorded there, why, that's acceptable. But it does take a little doing for some people, I realize.

Whatever this ancestor had done, you must be directly descended from him lineally. You must be a direct lineal descendent although you don't have to go through just one line. My great-grandfather Hale had married a Hayes. Well, the Hayes's were in New Hampshire at the time of the Revolution and they participated. My great-grandfather Hale's father, William, had married a Shackford girl. The Shackford's had also participated in the Revolution and her mother had been a Buzzell; we can go back on that Buzzell line. As long as you are a direct lineal descendent in that line, you can change from a grandfather to a grandmother. Now in some societies you cannot do that—Founders and Patriots is one.

They have a very complicated way of tracing their lineage and I really don't understand it. A woman herself may be eligible to belong, but her daughter wouldn't be. But we can go from a grandfather's line to a grandmother's. I was lucky; my family never left New England. I was the first one. So that things just can pretty much fall into place. But I know people who have worked as long as ten years to get one particular link that they needed. It's a little hard to write to these places and have them answer your questions. Some are better than others about doing it, though.

Let's see. Before we get into the purpose of the organization, I think it might be a bit interesting to say just how we were founded. That was because the Sons of the American Revolution refused to admit women as members. So the ladies, naturally, got a little bit upset about that. Mrs. Mary S. Lockwood wrote an article to The Washington Post and criticized this kind of thing. In this article, she particularly mentioned Hannah Arnett, who was apparently very active during the Revolutionary War and was an, extremely patriotic woman. Well, Hannah Arnett's great-grandson, I believe it was, saw this piece in the paper. He was a member of SAR himself, but he offered to help the ladies organize their own group. October 11, 1890, is considered the official founding date. There were six women who appeared to form this group. Mrs. Benjamin Harrison, whose husband was President Harrison, was the first President-General in 1890. In 1896, the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution was chartered by an act of Congress. Each year, still, DAR submits a report to the United States Senate on all our activities. This is [done] through the Smithsonian Institute in Washington.

Now, their purposes were to, well, I guess they said it best: "... to perpetuate the

memory and spirit of the men and women who achieved American independence; by the acquisition and protection of historical spots and the erection of monuments; by the encouragement of historical research in relation to the American Revolution and the publication of its results; also to carry out the injunction of Washington in his Farewell Address to the American people to promote as an object of primary importance institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge." And this is "to develop an enlightened public opinion and affording to young and old such advantages as shall develop in them the largest capacity for performing the duties of American citizens; and to cherish, maintain, and extend the institutions of American freedom; and to foster a true patriotism and love of country." There are a few more things.

I think that certainly on the national level and on the local level, these things have been carried out to some extent, although it's gotten, I think, increasingly difficult in later years to do them, certainly. Now, many years back when immigrants were detained on Ellis Island for long periods of time, the DAR ladies in the vicinity would go out to Ellis Island. They would take them clothing, sewing supplies, things with which to pass the time more or less. But at least they visited. They did something to help them, maybe, make it a little easier while they were waiting. But, of course, this isn't necessary any more. But what that has developed into is our DAR Manual for Citizenship. DAR's throughout the entire United States supply these citizenship manuals free to anyone who is studying for their examination. We do it here. In January, 1977, Mr. Paul Wright asked for forty-five more manuals for use in a new citizenship class. It's an on-going thing. Mr. Peter Burley, who's Assistant District Attorney in Las Vegas, came to this country from England

and he studied for his citizenship exams from our DAR manual, too. I presume they must have other sources that they use, too, but this seems to be a primary manual. It's probably concise and to the point. One time we were requested to give these manuals to one of the junior high school classes. One of our members, Gay Sandburg, teaches at Trainor Junior High here in Reno and she wanted them for a government class. We did provide them, but that was an exception to the rule because usually they do go just to the citizenship classes.

Hillside School in Marlborough, Massachusetts, was established to aid the children of immigrants and foreign-born students in order to offer them a way to become familiar with the American language and American ways, too. Now, that is a DAR approved school and is primarily a function of the Massachusetts Daughters. In the West we have not been concerned with that. They do a great deal with it, though, in financial support. Just recently they gave them five hundred dollars. It's sometimes referred to as the Hillside School for Boys, although in our handbook it's out known as Hillside School, Incorporated. I suppose they have to take girls in now, too. [Laughter] Speaking of schools, which has been an important DAR project always, we own and operate two schools. That's Tamassee, which is located in Tamassee, South Carolina. That was founded in 1919 by the South Carolina Daughters and made a project of the National Society in 1920. It's a boarding school and they accept children from age three through graduation from high school. They also have a public day school from kindergarten through the eighth grade. Kate Duncan Smith School, which we also own, is in Grant, Alabama. That was established by the Alabama Daughters in 1924, and, there again, taken over as a national project a few

years later. They have a day school in grades one through twelve. It's not a boarding school and it's the only junior high school in a one hundred square mile area. They not only teach academic subjects—probably not too many of those—it's vocational; home economics, shop work, some mechanics, that kind of thing. In these schools, the teachers salaries are paid by the state or county, but they are totally supported—as far as their buildings, the equipment they receive—by DAR. There's one in Kentucky—it's a settlement school. I believe that's the Berry School, but I'm not sure about the name on that. We do contribute to its support.

We have four approved schools; Hillside and Berry are two of them. One criteria for an approved school is that it must be for underprivileged children. This is a very important thing. And, of course, they must be willing to teach American history. They cannot be a group that is opposed to saluting the flag or studying government or that kind of thing, you know. They must foster a certain amount of patriotic feeling and teach that kind of thing. But always these children must be underprivileged.

The National Society budgets ten thousand a year apiece for Tamassee and Kate Duncan Smith and the rest is made up through extra fund raising or through private donations that some of us may give.

Now the Indian schools. Bacone is, of course, something that the Baptists are also affiliated with. We do give scholarships there. A regular scholarship is three hundred dollars. A nursing scholarship is two hundred. This year the National Society has established a chair in silversmithing for the boys to carry on their traditional workmanship, or to learn it. The other school is St. Mary's Episcopal School for Indian Girls. That's in South Dakota and that we contribute to. The

National Society also has an American Indian scholarship fund for deserving students.

In 1919, when the Daughters in South Carolina established a school for underprivileged children—mountain children—the government wasn't helping. This was something you did yourself. Now, I'm sure there would be some act that would cover it. We have VISTA now. We have Manpower. We have so many different projects that are tax-supported. But at that time they just simply weren't. Unless a group of women established a settlement school, it wasn't done. It might be done through a church, of course, but it wouldn't certainly be a government affair. The same with putting up historical markers, or restoration of buildings. Although buildings are still pretty much left to the individual in a sense, you can qualify for government funding now which you couldn't a few years ago to renovate an historic spot. The State Department in Nevada puts up historical markers. You don't have to do these things as an individual nowadays. You realize what enormous sums of money this would take to do something nowadays. Even back in the 1920's when the ladies got started on Fort Churchill, they ran into that same problem—that it was going to take more money. Even when they were made custodians. That's really why they had to go with the Park System, because it did mean a chance to really get in and have some work done, which no matter how rich you were—even if you had several members that contributed generously—they still couldn't contribute that much, you know, unless they were enormously wealthy people doing something like a Rockefeller. I think it is too bad when the government doesn't want you to perhaps keep a school or a scholarship or a grant the way it was meant to be, originally. You know, to help a particular group that might need help. Or you

want it to go to a girl, particularly, and now you're supposed to have it be a boy or a girl. Of course, our Good Citizen is still a girl, but we get around that a little bit, I suppose, by having the Good Citizenship Medal—which is a boy and a girl both, usually.

We have given a small Indian scholarship here in this county every year. This year, it does so happen, is the last year. So we have tried on a local level to carry out the things that National does. And I think that working with a local project is really more important than sending your money off somewhere, in many respects.

The buildings that DAR owns in Washington cover, I believe, practically an entire block. The museum is open to the public all the time, except the week that Continental Congress meets. Then it's members only. Their collection of Americana is, I would think, quite lovely. 1830 is the cut-off date. Also, the genealogical reference library—anyone may use the books. Now these books are not loaned out; you have to use them in the library. Nonmembers do have to pay a dollar a day for the use of the library facilities.

* * * * *

The first chapter to be organized in Nevada was in Goldfield in 1905. This remained active until about 1915 when the population dwindled. There seems to be very little material on this chapter. I know nothing about it except those two dates and I have never known anyone who did. But the next chapter was Nevada Sagebrush, which was organized February 22, 1923, in Reno by Mrs. Joseph Gelder. Polly Gelder had come to Reno to divorce her first husband. Like a lot of us, she liked it here and remained and married Mr. Gelder. She put an ad in the paper to know if there were any women

around who would care to organize a chapter. They met at the Twentieth Century Club. That was their first meeting. The organizing members were Alice Addenbrook, Frances Atkinson, Gertrude Boyd, Alice Chism, Clara Butterfield Chism, Harriett Gelder, Kate German, Florence Karns, Rachel Kent, Sarah Mack, Sarah Moon, Grace Nelson, and Aileen Shewalter. Those were the organizing members. Charter members were Helen Baldwin, Emmaline Butterfield Benham, Marcia Boyne, Elizabeth Brown, Martha Landt, Martha Pohe, Ellen Goodrich Priest, and Gladys. Tabb. In 1949, John C. Fremont Chapter as organized by Mrs. John Beaupert. Lahontan Chapter at Fallon was organized on February 10, 1950, with Mrs. Andrew Drumm, Sr. as organizing Regent. Francisco Garces in Las Vegas was organized February 18, 1950. Toiyabe Chapter in Reno was organized March 5, 1951. Valley of Fire in Henderson, Nevada, on May 14, 1957. Old Spanish Trail in Paradise Valley, Nevada, on October 16, 1966. Now Old Spanish Trail and Toiyabe have both disbanded, but the other chapters are still active. Lahontan is the smallest chapter in the state and, I believe, probably in the United States. They have a very small group, but they stay in there.

Nevada Sagebrush has been an active group. We have between [one] hundred and forty and [one] hundred and fifty members in Nevada Sagebrush. This is the largest chapter in the state. They are larger than Las Vegas. They have always participated in historical parades; they've had floats. One year they won a silver cup for participation. They placed several plaques around town—one on the Truckee River bridge. They have placed one by Franktown—that was in conjunction with the second chapter, though. They placed one at the University campus at one time, but I believe with all the changes there have

been on the campus, that has been removed for some reason. They planted down at the State House a baby elm that was an offshoot of the elm in Cambridge where Washington took command of the Continental Army. All kinds of things, but the biggest project was Fort Churchill. Now this is another thing that would be hard to do now—I'm sure the government would send somebody to restore the forts.

Shortly after they were organized, they wanted a project that would tie in with their national theme for "the acquisition and protection of historic spots." Well, that was about as historic I guess maybe as you could get—with Fort Churchill. So, anyway, the state officials approved of this and were willing to give assistance in promoting it. But Governor Scrugham found that the land belonged to the federal government. It didn't belong to Nevada at all. Nothing could be done until the Department of the Interior had been consulted and approved. So a bill was passed in 1925, giving the land on which Fort Churchill stands to the state. Nevada, in turn, made Sagebrush Chapter custodians, and they placed signs of custodianship. The press was co-operative at that time, which I think probably gave it a lot more coverage than they would be willing to give to a social group—or even historically social group—in a project. It was 1932 before the state received a patent to the land and the deed of transfer and trust was authorized. This was filed in the Lyon County Deed Book 28, page 38, and dated June 16, 1934. It had been patented and transferred to them. They were no longer just custodians of it.

Then when the Emergency Works Program of the federal government was created, they thought they were going to get some help from the federal government because this was going to take a terrific

amount of money—more money than a group of women could honestly raise. So in order to receive any help at all in this Federal Works Project, they had to be under the State Park Division of the National Park Service. But Nevada had no Park Division at that time. To rectify that, the two hundred acres of Fort Churchill were deemed Nevada's first State Park. Still before anything could happen, they had to re-convey the deed of trust and transfer back to the state. [laughter] And also to sign a free rental agreement including the use of water, all dead timber for fuel and any other camp equipment. So the Civilian Conservation Corps worked out there in 1935. They had 250 CC boys out there. That was when work started on this first historic preservation in Nevada, which actually was the start of the Nevada State Park System, because up until that time there hadn't been any.

We have also contributed books to the Washoe County Library. These are mainly on genealogical subjects and are placed in the Reference Room. Right now we have started a project. There's a series of five books to be published. One of our members is giving volume number one this year and I have said I would give volume number two. Hopefully, we will acquire the whole five. This is a history of the Morrill family—the Morrills for whom, you know, every university has a Morrill Hall. These are those Morrills. We also have a state scholarship here which was established by one of our State Regents, Mrs. Samuel Warner from Las Vegas. It is called the Ila Warner Scholarship Fund and each year one hundred dollars is given to a student at either the University of Nevada Reno or the University of Nevada Las Vegas. We give smaller awards, medals, certificates in the high schools and junior highs. A DAR Good Citizen is selected from the graduating senior class. This must

be a girl, still, and she is eligible to compete on the national level with DAR Good Citizens from other states for scholarships. The good citizenship [awards] are given to either boys or girls—and this is simply a medal and a certificate. It's not a monetary thing. At different times we've given books as prizes to children in the grade schools for their essays. During American History Month, the children who write the prize-winning essays are always given a medal. Again, there's no monetary reward. The ones that are selected on our chapter level are competing then against those from other chapters. Then a winner on the state level is selected, too. And that is sent to National and they compete on a higher-up level. It goes in steps.

The interest in the Indians has continued out here. Miss Phyllis Walsh is always quite active and interested in the Indian—and we have continued that, too. We usually schedule one meeting a year in which an Indian speaks on some subject or another. Many times they're publishers of one of the Indian papers. Last year it was a group of AWVS Indian women from Nixon. One year it was somebody exhibiting silver—you know, turquoise and silver. One of our Nevada Sagebrush members for the last several years now, in memory of her mother, has placed flowers at the base of the flagpole in the Indian cemetery at Nixon. She takes the Children of the American Revolution group with her. These are a group of youngsters anywhere from babies on up through age eighteen. They are members of the Fort Churchill Society CAR. The Fallon group, Lahontan Chapter, one time were very active at the Stewart Indian School. At that time the government would provide yard goods for the girls in the sewing classes, but they didn't provide trim—lace, fancy buttons, anything that a girl might like to put on a

dress. It's no fun to cut out a dress and there it is. Lahontan has contributed quite a bit to the Indians there.

* * * * *

We are a non-partisan group and we are nonpolitical, but we do believe in voting. We cannot support an issue as a group. Maybe if something comes up here in the state, we as a group can't support it, but as individuals we would be encouraged to write and state our views on it. Some things are, of course, made into resolutions. They pass your chapter readings, they pass the state readings, and then they're sent to Continental Congress where there is a Resolution Committee. Possibly there that kind of thing would be taken up. Then if it passes Continental Congress, you see, it would be our official stand on the subject. I don't know if I've made that particularly clear or not. [Laughter] But that would be the only way in which we could do that. At the last state conference, one resolution that was adopted was against abolishing the loyalty oath for all Civil Service employees. They felt that it was very important that a Civil Service employee should be loyal; he should be willing to take an oath. They were also against giving pensions to aliens. These are not people who are naturalized citizens. They were not against that. These are people who are simply living in this country and receiving supplemental Social Security, receiving all kinds of government help that some of the rest of us who do live here would never be eligible for in a million years. Those are two things. These are the two most recently passed. I have better wording on that last one, but that was the general idea of it—that these people are not citizens, yet they are being supported by tax monies, just the same.

I don't know, maybe we are non-political in the sense that we don't take a party side, as a group—now that we still don't do. Even on a national level, it's issues—not parties. Does our membership tend toward one political party or another? I think that depends a lot on the section of the country you're from. I would say, though, from my own experience they tend toward the Republicans more, or certainly a more conservative one than the Democrats might be with some of the government spending programs. Most DAR's are opposed to those. I would think that possibly, politically speaking, they could be classified as conservative, but I think even our Democratic members are certainly very conservative Democrats—compared to what you would find in a big city, for instance.

In our meetings, we're not a fraternal organization. Now I think that is a point, too. Many of these groups, you know, have a password, a handshake, some kind of secret thing, you know. Or the meetings will always be closed to the public because there is a certain ritual that only members are allowed to participate in. This we do not have at all, in any way, on any level, whether it's a chapter or a national. Our meetings are open and anyone could attend Continental Congress, depending on seating available. There is nothing that goes on that is kept a secret. If we have any business, it is open for anybody to find out about because, as I said earlier, we make a report to Congress every year through the Smithsonian Institute of all our activities. Certainly we have no secrets.

Naturally, we have a certain amount of form to our meetings. I think one DAR meeting in one part of the country would be very much like that of another. We always start out with The American's Creed [and] Salute to the Flag. Then we have five minutes of national defense; We have a national

defense chairman in each chapter. They read an excerpt from an article— usually from The National Defender. There are five minutes of that. Usually the President-General's message is read, which appears in the DAR magazine. Now that's pretty much the way every meeting starts, you know, with that particular ritual gone through. After that, you just go into regular minutes, treasurer's report, just as anything else would before you get to your program. Now our programs usually are based on some kind of historical facet—not always though. Many times it's musical. One thing that Nevada Sagebrush was very interested in when they were first founded here was playing more American music, as opposed to foreign composers. We have one older member, now, Mrs. Guy Benham—this is still her pet committee, American music, and always she has to have a program each year of this. But it's good, too. After all, we do have composers in America just as well as any other place. But that was one thing the chapter was very interested in when they first organized—American music. Many times it will be a speaker on some historical subject, but not necessarily. It could be a book review, slides of, say, Williamsburg. We had a program on that at one time. One time it was a discussion of art. Some lady here in town owns a Cezanne, so she brought that to the meeting and discussed the fine points of that. We don't have to go with an historical program every time. Usually we do have one program on national defense. Maybe it's somebody from the University. Maybe it's someone here in town affiliated with the services in some way or another, speaking why we shouldn't give up the Panama Canal Zone—that was one topic one year. They've had programs, too, on flowers. Conservation is still an important part of DAR; we have a conservation committee chairman. Many

times we just simply get someone from the power company. They put on a very good conservation program. They did one last year on water. Possibly it's slanted a bit in the power company's favor, but usually we will include one program on conservation each year. It can be grazing land—one year that was the topic. Of course, this past winter it was water. That was the big thing here. So I wouldn't say that they were certainly all slanted backwards. I think there is something contemporary in our programs. And always the tea and cookies afterward. Don't forget the tea and cookies. [Laughter] I'd say our programs were pretty much like any other group's— a little bit of everything.

* * * * *

We have a state conference once a year. It's always held in March and we alternate between the North and the South. One year we're down there; the next year we're up here. Each chapter sends delegates to it, just as anyone else. They used to be a two-day affair, but now we've streamlined and do it all up in one. They're a very nice time. Continental Congress in Washington is held in April every year. Each chapter is entitled to send delegates based on membership. Of course, mere may attend, but two are our official number. Any more can attend that want to, but the distance between Washington and Nevada is a little great and the only person who has any of her traveling expenses paid is our State Regent. And we only give her two hundred dollars, which really doesn't go very far—a roundtrip ticket, a week in a hotel in Washington, D.C., and all the lunches and dinners and breakfasts you're going to be invited to. There are very few years that she hasn't attended from this state. When Senator Bible was there—and the same with Congressman Baring—they always sat

in the Nevada box at the evening celebration. Of course, Mrs. Bible and Mrs. Baring are both DAR's, so that they always went anyway because they were in Washington. Last year we had four members from Nevada go and that, I'd say, is good representation from a state like this with our small membership and the distance included. We had three members from the southern part and one from up north here. California, of course, that's a large state. They have many chapters and they have a good-sized delegation, so we do a little bit as Senator Laxalt is doing, in getting together with the other Western states. We get together with them, too, back there because we are a smaller group. When they have their state's breakfast, a state like Nevada couldn't hope to put on a breakfast all by itself, so we do it with Oregon or Washington or New Mexico or somebody else. That's about how that works.

I'm sure it would be exciting. I'd like to see the buildings because I understand that they are very lovely. They are so fantastic in themselves and they are appraised at so much. They are worth so much—the real estate, you know. It's up into millions of dollars, I guess, now. I think it's something like a block from the White House—a very short distance. And we own them outright, plus all the things that they must have in that museum. And people have been very generous, I think, about giving things—family things, furniture, silver, portraits, linens, many things. I don't know if I had them if I'd really want to part with them or not, but maybe you get to thinking about it and thinking that, well, it should go someplace where it will be taken care of now; or I don't have anyone to leave it to who really cares—that kind of thing.

Our DAR magazine, well, that's the official publication. We have other things; the DAR Hand book (that's members only); a list of things that you can buy, Flag Codes, Know

the DAR. There are quite a few, but I would say the magazine is the main publication and the thing perhaps that the public does see. We used to place a copy in the public library and then decided that maybe there wasn't enough interest in it, so we did discontinue that. Occasionally they have been placed in the school libraries, but I don't think that's done much anymore. I think perhaps it's something that high school youngsters wouldn't have any interest in. I don't know of any chapter that does that now.

In our state organization, we have, as I mentioned, a State Regent. We have the same set-up for state offices that we do for chapter offices—you have your Regent, Vice-Regent, Chaplain, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary, Registrar, Librarian, and Historian. This is something you find in every chapter, no matter where you're located. Then on the state [level], you have that same group of offices. Then they function on the national level with the same names, only they're called your President-General, Vice-President-General, Registrar-General and your Historian-General—that kind of thing. Now I've been on the Nevada State Board three times. I've been State Recording Secretary; I've been State Librarian; and presently I'm State Recording Secretary, but I'll be through with that in March. On our state level, our terms of office are two years and in the chapter they're one-year terms. They are two years on the national level [and] your delegates to Continental Congress vote for them. If we didn't have any delegates that year, we wouldn't have any votes. That's the way that works.

They do [conduct] very elaborate campaigns [on the national level]. They send out literature. They have their whole slate of offices drawn up, and you vote for the slate rather than for the individual person. They

send out brochures with all the pictures, with their backgrounds, beginning from school days on up to every office in any society they've ever held. The majority of them are Eastern or Mid-western women who are elected. We've had one President-General from California—that was Eleanor Spicer. She was from California. I think they're concerned with [DAR] policy, I really do. I think they're also perhaps someone who is perhaps managerial—the kind of woman who, if she were having a career, would be good at it because she would be forceful enough. I would say that they have to be well-to-do women, too. It would certainly help. During the winter months, they live in Washington, D.C. It's just like being in Congress—you're there. And someone has to take care of home for you while you're gone. Not everyone would be free to pick up and go. And usually they are not young women because, there again, if you have children running around, what would you do with them? They're apt to be older and very experienced in DAR. They've been at it for years and years really. And usually they have served on the national level in some capacity or another before. They would be, you know, as high up as Vice-President-General. She would have to be that before she could be President-General.

Do the campaigns seem fairly friendly? Out here, of course, it does seem friendly, but I think when you're back in the Eastern States, it isn't quite so friendly. I think there's a big difference in the attitude. I do know on the chapter level in New Hampshire one time, one of the ladies was not too happy with the chapter to which she belonged, so she transferred to another one where they thought she was wonderful. They even wanted her to be the State Regent, whereas if she had stayed where she was, there was this certain amount of feelings. We don't have that here. Nobody

is competing for office on the local level; I can assure you of that. [Laughter]

Every two years the President-General visits Nevada. This is one thing she has to do in the term of her office—go to each state and visit the chapters. When she comes to your state, you're supposed to have something special for her. You know, you're supposed to do everything up just really right. Because we are such a small group, it must be very difficult for her when she comes here from a state where, say, they've had three hundred people at a dinner, and here we are with just so few of us.

We're supposed to wear white gloves. Years ago, you even had to wear a hat to DAR meetings. Then the more bouffant hair-do's came in. So they made it a ruling that you didn't have to wear a hat and flatten your hair-do anymore. Nowadays we can even wear pantsuits, but not when the President-General is around at state conference. It's still frowned on. I've heard several women here in Nevada mention—and certainly we're a liberal state—that somebody wore pants to a particular meeting at a time when the President-General was there and she really didn't think that was right. And we are always supposed to wear our white gloves. So we had our orders for last conference—be sure to bring your white gloves. And we all showed up for the Processional with our white gloves on. We marched into our places and the color bearers are there and we're standing up. All of a sudden, we're ready to salute the flag and the word is whispered down the line, "Take your right glove off. Take your right glove off." Because DAR's salute the flag with their right hand uncovered. Now why we do this, I don't know because many officers or color guards are gloved. But we have to remove our right glove and we're pretty busy getting our gloves off and on.

They're not written-down things. The one about the hats was, though. No, it's just the custom, perhaps more than anything else, left over from the days that when a lady went out, she went out hatted and gloved. That was it.

Now on the chapter level, this does not apply at all. It's only when we have someone from National there. I believe you're even supposed to still wear elbow-length white gloves to evening affairs in Washington. It's very formal. Within our own chapter, we don't— although I do know our immediate past chapter Regent (although she wears pants and pantsuits) never presided wearing them. So I don't think I'm going to break with tradition there. Now when I was secretary, I wore a pantsuit to meeting— but as a Regent, I don't know. [Laughter]

I don't think it hurts and, really, for a younger person who is joining, it wouldn't be something that would bother her at all, I should think in the least. I don't think she'd even think about it. And for that matter, she probably could do as she pleased. Many of us are old enough so that we pretty much grew up with white gloves. I wasn't too much in the hat era; I did buy hats, but that I stopped. It's not foreign to me, but now it would be. But I wouldn't necessarily think about keeping gloves on inside any more. I'd probably take them off—unless I'd been told to keep them on.

One thing that we don't have in Nevada is a screening committee for any applicant. Now you do find that in some organizations. You may be eligible to join and you may have all your credentials and all your papers in order, but the screening committee, say, could approve not to pass on you for some reason or another. We do not screen applicants in the state of Nevada. I know of other historical groups that do have a screening process. And also it used to be in one of these organizations

that if one member voted against you for any reason, you would not be allowed to join. But I do know they've since changed that; so that, one vote wouldn't keep a person out.

As to why one joins DAR, I think there are any number of reasons. I don't think it's being particularly interested in national projects. Certainly not if you live in the West. I think it's mostly because you're interested in history and the American past and background. You know quite a bit about your family and you're interested in what they did. And I suppose, too, you can say you're even a little bit proud of the part that they played in helping make this a better place for other people to come to. I think that's an important way to feel about your membership. Not that your own family maybe did anything so totally spectacular, but it was helping all the time to make it better. That I think.

I was on the plane once from Boston to Reno. I was sitting next to a very nice woman. She was going to Colorado to visit her sister. So we started talking and DAR came up in the conversation. Her sister in Colorado belonged to DAR. and I was one in Nevada. But my sister in New England didn't belong and she said, "Well, this is your tie with home. That's why you join out here. It's your own link, your own identity, so to speak, as opposed to maybe your husband's family—to the place where you belong." That was her theory. I had never thought of it that way, but maybe it is.

* * * * *

I think DAR is going to go on for a while, though, I really do. Maybe they don't really want to join—especially younger people—right now, but I think there comes a time in your life. Maybe you get a little bit older; then perhaps you're more settled, more interested in joining it. You're more in sympathy with

your family as you get older. When you're very young, you think, "My family and I have nothing in common." Something like that. And the older you get, the more you realize that you do have a lot in common with them.

We do need younger members, that's true. But I just simply don't think that younger women are ready to join much of anything. I have three daughters and they're interested in DAR; you know, they like to hear about it. But they don't belong to anything. It doesn't matter what it is, they don't belong to it. That's all. And yet, as I say, they're always interested. I think that is the way it is with a lot of the younger people. They're still interested in what their families did. When they realize that somebody in the family was living here at such-and-such a time or somebody else came West on a covered wagon, I don't see how they could fail to be interested. I really don't.

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A

Addenbrook, Alice, 27
 Abolition, 4
 American's Creed, 36
 American History Month, 32
 Arcade Building, 8
 Arnett, Hannah, 18-19
 Articles of Association, 15
 Atkinson, Frances, 27
 AWVS, 32

B

Bacone College, 23
 Baldwin, Helen, 27
 Baring, Congressman Walter, 39
 Baring, Geraldine, 39
 Bay Colony, 4
 Beacon Hill, 1
 Beaupert, Mrs. John, 27
 Benham, Mrs. Guy, 37
 Benham, Emmaline, 27
 Berry School, 23
 Bible, Loucile Jacks, 39
 Bible, Senator Alan, 39
 Bonanza Restaurant, 8
 Boston Harbor, 7
 Boston Tea Party, 15
 Boyd, Gertrude, 27
 Boyne, Marcia, 27
 Brown, Elizabeth, 27
 Burley, Peter, 21
 Butler, General Benjamin, 2
 Buzzell family, 6, 17

C

Calef, Robert, 4
 Cattle, 7
 Chamber of Commerce Bldg., 9
 Children of the American Revolution, 33
 Chism, Alice, 27
 Chism, Clara Butterfield, 27
 Civil Service employees, 34
 Civil War, 4, 15
 Civilian Conservation Corps 22
 Colbrandt's, 8
 Collier, Louise, 8, 9
 Conservation, 38
 Continental Congress (DAR), 14, 33, 36, 39

stello, Beatrice, 1
 Crosby, Beatrice, 1
 Crosby Farm, 1
 Crosby, Robert Shackford, 1

D

DAR Manual for Citizenship, 20
 Daughters of the American Revolution, 5, 13, 20, 35
 Daughters of the American Revolution-Library, 26
 Daughters of the American Revolution-Museum, 26, 40
 Davidson, Jane, 10
 Davidson, Spence, 10
 Declaration of Independence, 14
 Democratic Party, 35
 Dover, New Hampshire, 1
 Drumm, Mrs. Andrew, Sr., 27

E

Ellis Island, 20
 Emergency Works Program, 30
 Ernst family, 10
 Ernst, Robert, 10
 Evers family, 10-11

F

Fallon, Nevada, 27
 Fort Churchill, Nevada, 25, 28
 Founders and Patriots, 18
 Francisco Garces Chapter (DAR), 27
 Franktown, Nevada, 28
 Free Soil Party, 4
 Freedom Papers, 5

G

Gallio family, 10
 Gelder, Harriett, 27
 Gelder, Polly, 27
 German, Kate, 27
 Golden Bar, 8
 Golden Hotel, 8
 Goldfield, Nevada, 26
 Grantsville, Nevada, 9

H

Hale, Deacon Richard, 4

H

Hale family, 17
Hale, John, 1
Hale, Major Samuel, 4-5
Hale, Nathan, 4
Hale, Sarah Noyes, 3
Hale, Senator John, 4
Hale's Location, 5
Harrison, Caroline Scott, 19
Harrison, President Benjamin, 19
Harvard College, 1
Hayes family, 6, 16, 17
Henderson, Nevada, 27
Hillside School for Boys, 21
Holstein Frisian cattle, 7

I

Indian schools, 23
Indians, 32

J

John C. Fremont Chapter (DAR), 27
Joseph Magnin's, 8

K

Karns, Florence, 27
Kate Duncan Smith School, 22
Kent, Rachel, 27
King George III, 5

L

Lahontan Chapter (DAR), 27-28, 33
Landt, Martha, 27
Las Vegas, Nevada, 27
Laxalt, Senator Paul, 40
Leonard family, 10
Lockwood, Mary S., 18
Lyon County, Nevada, 30

M

Mack, Sarah, 27
"Maiden's Blush" Apples, 12
Manpower, 24
Mecklinburg Declaration, 15
Medway, Massachusetts, 1
Miller, Arthur, 3

Mining-Gold, 13
Mining-Lead, 13
Moon, Sarah, 27
Morrill family, 31
Morrill Hall, 31

N

National Defender, The, 36
Nelson, Grace, 27
Nevada Sagebrush Chapter (DAR),
27-28, 29, 32, 37
Nevada State Historical Society,
9
Nevada State Parks, 30
New Hampshire, University of, 1
Nixon, Nevada, 33

O

Oath of Allegiance, The, 15
Oath of Fidelity and Support, The
15
Old Spanish Trail Chapter (DAR),
28-28

P

Paradise Valley, Nevada, 28
Pemberton Square, 1
Phips, Sir William, 3
Piscataqua, 6
Pohe, Martha, 27
Priest, Ellen Goodrich, 27
Prohibition, 6

R

Radcliffe College, 1
Randolph, Massachusetts, 1
Reno, Nevada, 7, 8, 9
Republican Party, 35
Riverside Hotel, 8

S

St. Mary's Episcopal School for
Indian Girls, 24
Sandburg, Gay, 21
Scrugham, James, G., 29
Shackford family, 6, 17
Shaker communities, 12

S

"Sheep's Nose" Apples, 12
Shewalter, Aileen, 27
Smithsonian Institute, 19, 36
Social Security, 34
Sons of the American Revolution,
18
Spicer, Eleanor, 43
State Building (Reno, NV.), 9
Stewart Indian School, 33

T

Tabb, Gladys, 27
Talcott family, 10
Talcott, Neil, 10
Tamassee School, 22
Thornton, Beatrice, 9
Thornton family, 11
Thornton, Hale Crosby, 1
Thornton, Jennifer, 9
Thornton, Victor, 9, 13
Thornton, Victoria, 9
Toiyabe Chapter (DAR), 14, 27, 28
Tory families, 5
Truckee River, 28
Twentieth Century Club (Reno, NV.),
27

U

Unionville, Nevada, 9
University of Nevada, Reno, 28

V

Valley of Fire Chapter (DAR), 27
VISTA, 24
Veteran's Administration Archives,
16

W

Walsh, Phyllis, 32
Warner, Ila, 31
Washington Post, The, 18
Washington, President George,
19, 28
Washoe County Court House, 9
Washoe County Library, 9, 31
Wentworth, Royal Governor of
New Hampshire, 5
Wright, Paul, 21

